VI

The Commander of Our Camel-Saddles

721 [202] WHEN WE DREW rein, slaves were already lighting a huge signal-fire to call together the warriors of the tribe. A strong raiding-party of the Bishri (the three federated clans of the Anaza: the Fid'an, Saba, and Amarat) was reported to be advancing. It was said to number five hundred camel-riders, with some hundreds of war-mares. Perhaps the numbers were exaggerated.

That night Amir Fuaz made all his dispositions. Before the first grey of dawn Faris was at my bedside. "Awake, if thou wouldst ride with us," I heard him say, with a laugh. I jumped up and hastened to make ready for the march. Faris handed me a filled water-skin, a lump of pressed dates, several balls of hard Bedouin cheese, the size of a fist, and a stack of fresh-baked [492] bread-cakes. With the help of Mnahi, who was to be my rider-attendant, I stowed everything in the saddlebags of my *dhalul* (racing-camel), saddled Sadha, my white war-mare, and tied her by her halter to the dromedary's cinch.

Amir Fuaz had appointed Faris leader of our camel corps.

• 726 It was still dark when we started. The moon had set. The night was calm and the voices of the riders chanting as they rode made no echo, but moved over the desert

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

like a wave of sound—eerie, magic, beautiful. In the darkness loomed the indistinct figures of the camels; now and then only was heard the faint padding of soft soles, or the creak of a saddle. Thus, like riders from another world, we made our noiseless way among the hills, till dawn broke over them and at last the sun rose. 726

Slender, silver chains, braided girths, and coloured halters, embroidered with blue and red beads, adorned the necks and flanks of our camels. At their sides cantered the riderless mares, necks gently arched, supple backs taut, tails high—held only by the gay-coloured top-piece of the woollen headgear; for the Bedouins of Arabia, in contrast to the African, use neither bit nor bridle. The thin saddle-cloths were made of panther or gazelle skins, secured by a narrow leather girth. [492]

Like wildcats, with glittering eyes and taut muscles, the companion-riders crouched behind their comrades on the high humps of the camels, carbines at the ready. From their shoulders floated the ends of their *kaffiyahs*, which they wore wound about head and neck. [291]

In the early afternoon, Faris, riding at our head in the midst of his black bodyguard, gave the signal to change mounts; he had seen a dust cloud which, it appeared, was caused by two automobiles now approaching rapidly.

In the twinkling of an eye, sixty-seven fierce fellows had flung themselves, rifle in hand, from their trotting dromedaries to the backs of their mares and had unslipped the lines from the camel-girths. Then they dug their bare heels into their horses' flanks, and leaving the camel-troop behind, forged ahead and were lost in a

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

726 cloud of dust. Only their wild yells, the neighing of their horses, and the drumming of the hoofs were audible. The mad rush of the horsemen had made Sadha, my mare, restive; she pulled at her line and gave me to understand that she wanted to be in it too. I grabbed my Mauser and vaulted from the high saddle of my *dhalul* to her back. With a whinny she responded to the pressure of my thighs and careened after the others, extending herself like a gazelle when I, with my face almost touching her mane, called her by name. Closer and closer to the band thundering ahead she carried me, and soon I had overtaken the rearmost and was coming up with Faris and his escort.

715 The automobiles now appeared on a ridge and we recognized them at once as battle-cars of the Ruala. We all stopped and waited for their coming. It turned out that they carried Amir Fuaz himself, accompanied by Mijhem and several other men. They had captured in the neighborhood of their camp a scout of the Beni Sakhr. This man had refused to answer questions, and the Amir had forbidden his men to force information from him by torture; yet from the appearance of the spy in that locality, the young chieftain thought it reasonable to infer that the tribe of the Beni Sakhr had also taken arms against the Ruala, who were threatened from the other side as well by the Bishri. He therefore divided our force: two thirds, now under the command of Mijhem, were to remain facing the Bishri; the other third, under Faris, was to swing southeast against the Beni Sakhr.

000 Naturally, I attached myself to Faris's command. Be-

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

of the grey hills, and we bivouacked with them. All through the night they kept watering their herds at the deep well-holes, and we heard the incessant creaking of the small wooden rollers in the primitive wooden bearings, with their dripping ropes, some eighty feet long.

A few hours' ride beyond Mayku' we entered the wide dark tableland of Bsayta, the flattened remains of what is probably the oldest mountain range in the Arabian peninsula. A few inconsiderable summits, covered with a fine film of sand, still rise from its surface, which extends for more than sixty miles—a perfectly level waste without water, without pasture, on which it seems to have hailed black gravel. At one stroke the blithe world was changed; all round us was desolation. But gloomy and eerie as Bsayta appeared at first sight, a few days in it taught me to love this waste, with all its hopeless melancholy. The solitude and stillness as of an abandoned planet broded over it. Now and then an oryx-antelope or an ostrich fled at our approach. Very rarely did we pass a shrub that was knee-high or see a green leaf or a flower. No bird sang here; even snakes and lizards avoided this waste. Occasionally in summer, it depended on the rainfall, there grew a strange, rich crop in Bsayta —the *samh*, a low small-leaved plant, on whose twigs small berries ripen, containing reddish-brown seed granules. These the Bedouins roast and grind into a dark, bitter flour. Kneaded with sheep butter and dates, or boiled in water into a sort of porridge, it becomes edible.

After renewing our water supply at the Hausa well, we pushed on toward Bir Bair and into the northwestern Wadi Sirhan, the proper grazing grounds of the Beni

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

Sakhr. One after another we reconnoitred the scattered camps of our supposed enemy, despatching after each such reconnaissance two couriers with messages to our main body, which was then camping near the Umm Wual. One night Faris himself, "Commander of our Camel-saddles", as we called him, crept close enough to the tents of the Beni Sakhr to be able to listen to their talk. The total result of our efforts seemed to be the comforting conclusion that the Beni Sakhr must have given up their plans for a raid on the Ruala.

We preserved caution, however; and one morning, soon after sunrise, as we were lying in ambush on the salt-crusted ground under cover of some bushes, long lines of free camels appeared on the plain and scattered to graze. Behind them came loaded camels and migrating families of the Beni Sakhr. We hoped they would make camp before noon, so that we might make sure whether their fighting-men were still with them. But it was already late afternoon when we saw them, from a great distance, halt their camels. Tent-rolls and props tumbled to the ground, and women, children, and slaves industriously started to pitch the new camp. Now there arrived also numerous horsemen and camel-riders—the guards who had been covering the flanks of the migrating band.

Almost without sound our *dhaluls* rose as we left our last hiding-place and with long strides trotted after Faris's she-camel. She was pregnant and had been restless all day. Suddenly she refused to go farther and lay down. This spelt danger for us, for scouts always range

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

726 the vicinity of a Bedouin camp. Moreover, there could be no better place for the enemy to ambush us: white lime rocks shut us in on one side, while the rest was a confusion of blackish glistening scree and bush-crowned clay tumuli.

231 Several of us helped Faris to unharness his *dhalul*, since it was clear that she would calve. She turned on her side. Faris looked at us crestfallen, as if expecting reproaches; but all merely laughed at this misadventure. There was not a harsh word, no cursing, no blaming of the innocent camel—only that calm and composure of the Bedouin that ever evokes my admiration.

Faris kept tenderly stroking his beloved *dhalul*, and when the moment had come, while I held down the animal's head, he and one of his slaves aided the delivery of the calf. It was as tall as a grown man. At first, I thought it was stillborn, but after its mother had licked it for some time, it gave signs of life. That night the baby camel could stand on its legs and was allowed to suckle; but toward morning it was led aside and killed. The poor mother wailed and moaned loudly for her offspring. But she quieted down when Faris came back to her. She kept nosing his arm and shoulder and sniffing the air. This aroused my curiosity and I went nearer. Faris had sewn a piece of the baby camel's hide on the sleeve and shoulder of his cloak. It was this that had soothed the mother. Later in the afternoon, before we remounted, she let herself be milked. She would still whimper from time to time, but instantly became quiet when Faris reached out his arm or pressed his shoulder to her nostrils.

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

At length, about noon, we rode forward, our scouts 726 ● in advance.

Beyond a ridge we saw vultures circling. At the foot of its farther slope we found trampled ground and the dead bodies of a Bedouin and his riding-camel. The man's body had been stripped. Not a scrap of clothing could we find, neither saddle nor gear, to help us find out whence he had come and of what tribe he was.

One of our scouts came back just then to report that camels of the Beni Sakhr were grazing close ahead and that armed guards were with the herdsmen.

Suddenly we caught sight of a number of men on some rising ground, half hidden by the bushes, and the glint of rifles levelled at us. "Ho, there! Ye camel-riders!" they called to us.

"Friends!" Faris shouted back, as we pulled up. But shots cracked and bullets whistled over our heads. Faris laughed. "Beni Sakhr," he exclaimed. "Here stand Ruala. Here stands Faris ibn Naif. Peace—peace unto you!"

But the men did not trust us. It must, indeed, have seemed very suspicious to them that a *ghazu* of the Ruala should appear in so distant a region. They did not return our peace-greeting. Instead, cries of "Kill them! Kill them!" rose from many throats all around us.

New opponents seemed to rise out of the ground. Undoubtedly they had left their horses out of sight and had crept up under cover. At last, just when their shouts of "Kill them" sounded particularly ominous, and shots crackled repeatedly, and we were vainly trying to make ourselves understood in the general hubbub, one man strode from cover and called out: "Faris ibn Naif!"

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

726 Our leader slipped from his *dhalul* and called back joyously: "Jirad ibn Jeneyb!" It was one of the *shiyukhs* of the Beni Sakhr, and an old acquaintance of Faris.

726 619 In a trice the Beni Sakhr broke cover and pressed about us. We were deluged with questions as they led us to their camp, a few hours' distant. On the way Faris told them of the capture of a scout of their tribe and of our peaceable journey of inquiry into their grazing-grounds. Ever and again Ibn Jeneyb protested that the Beni Sakhr were at "unclouded peace" with the Ruala and that the captured spy must be a robber and an outcast from the tribe, who wanted to plunder the Ruala on his own account.

[486] When we had dismounted in his camp, Ibn Jeneyb had a camel slaughtered before our eyes. A slave caught its blood in a bowl. He then tore up a bunch of herbs, dipped it in the blood, and with this brush painted the tribal emblem on the necks and flanks of our riding-camels. This was to serve, as it were, as a guarantee of our peaceful intentions and as a safe conduct among the rest of the Beni Sakhr.

A small detachment of them were still pursuing Bedouins of the northwestern lava region, who had broken into the Wadi Sirhan and, the day before, had fallen on Beni Sakhr herders, grazing their camels. The raiders lost one dead—it was his corpse we had found—while the Beni Sakhr had two men wounded.

763 I visited these wounded men and found one of them, with two ghastly bullet wounds in his chest and abdomen, lying at the point of death. I did my best to save him—I had my case of surgical instruments, mor-

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

looted the scanty greyish-green pasture before their hungry mouths. Not a trace of vegetation survived their passage. They left behind nothing but naked, trampled earth, and over it a veil of dust and mist that hung in the still air for hours.

At the head of the advancing nation, in front of the centre of the first line, strode one fawn-colored camel, bearing on its back a singular structure adorned with hundreds of small tufts of black ostrich feathers and barbaric decorations. The large framework of acacia wood was balanced and secured on a saddle of special design. It was the *Markab*, the "Ship", also called *Abu-Dubur*, "Father of the Ages"—the Ark of Ishmael. It is the altar before which Bedouins for centuries have made their votive and thank-offerings. There is only one such Ark in all Arabia. For ages past it has moved from tribe to tribe, as one conquered the other. The Ruala had held it now for nearly one hundred and fifty years, and to them it has become the symbol of their unity and their emblem of war,—the tribal Great Banner, as it were. This ancient and hallowed standard, the Ruala will tell you, has been moved by the spirit of Allah at critical periods in their history, especially in grave and decisive conflicts, to reveal to them when and where to face the enemy and join battle.

This day, too, they expected to see God's presence and protection revealing themselves in mystic signs from the old frame on the camel's back.

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

XVII

The War Goddess

778
788
726

TRA'D IBN SATTAM hurried with me to the sacred Standard, which rose high above the travelling-litters. We made our way through an agitated throng. The buzz of women's and children's voices intermingled with the grunting and complaining of laden camels. On nearer approach I noticed a group of women afoot, threading their way to the Standard; they waved their head-cloths and kept up a high-pitched chant. They were escorting a young woman, walking sedately in their midst. It was Tuëma. Her beautiful serene face was radiant and aglow with health. Her eyes under their long lashes were grave and devout, but she had a bright glance for Tra'd ibn Sattam, who had chosen her out of all the Ruala maidens for the signal honour of riding in the *Markab*, and on recognizing me her cheeks dimpled with a smile.

When Tuëma and her train of women had come up with the camel which bore the tribal symbol, a tall powerful animal led by a slave, she ran by its side for a space. The trilling and waving of the women rose to a joyous frenzy. Suddenly Tuëma broke away from her retinue, and with a running start grasped the camel's shoulder-girth and climbed nimbly on to its back and into the Palladium. In the left fore-corner of the sacred structure was a seat with a footrest, and on this she composed herself, enthroned on high like a desert queen above her

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

people. Thereupon, she untied her head-cloth and her glorious tresses fell over her shoulders. At a sign from her, the escorting women, who had continued to walk beside the camels, climbed up again to their several litters.

From the midst of the migrating multitude now came the sounds of shots fired in jubilation, and soon tribesmen were galloping forward from all directions. They assembled and in a body raced toward the *Markab,* Faris at their head. Amidst the thunder of hoofs and the glint of carbines, there arose the wild chant of the young men as they pressed around their queen.

Tuëma had risen and stood erect in the lofty frame. Her face became transfigured in an ecstasy of joy. Suddenly she put both her hands to her throat and tore open her dress and broke into jubilant song. With bared breast she rose, straining her supple body until she was poised high above the ark, holding aloft a bunch of snow-white ostrich plumes. She looked like a goddess—the bravest and most beautiful maiden of her great tribe. She cried to the youths words of passionate eloquence. She inflamed them with warlike ardour. She exhorted them to remember the heroes who once had chained themselves to this Standard by means of the iron shackles of their mares, so that they might not leave their queen, but defend her to the last breath.

Faris's eyes were fixed in rapture on Tuëma, on her lofty throne. In his hand flashed the sword of Jidua, a great hero of the Ruala. He carried the historic blade to his lips with both hands and kissed it. "O Tuëma,

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

guardian of my soul!" he cried. Then he wheeled his horse and raced off with his riders.

Tra'd ibn Sattam took the leading rope of Tuēma's camel from the slave and led her past the marching tribe. For all the dire distress, a festive spirit animated the whole people. It was a festal day, for the Ruala had a queen again—a virgin in the sacred Ark; and under her symbolic leadership they pressed forward to their destiny.

Evening came and the whole tribe made camp. But in the grey of the next dawn they were on the march again.

Armed motor-cars circled about the widespread herds and guarded the flanks of the great migration. Despite the fact that we marched in close formation, it was inevitable under the conditions that single families or even groups of them, with their camels, should lag behind or struggle in detachments; these would be an easy prey for the enemy, of whose presence we were fully aware from the surprise attacks made each day by strong mounted bands and the appearance of numerous hostile fighting-motors.

2: Musil
721, 726, 727

MD4 Rwala MD4

[For songs, ditties, anecdotes and narratives of raids and warfare see category 116, pp. 512-522 and 532-661.]

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

6. Ah, sweet is their parade, when they ride before their chief shouting the war cry,
'Arfa and Sbê'i, when none hastens to their help.
7. They became our enemies, and we became their adversaries,
And I think that I shall not return after the parting.

A poet of the Sba'a tribe encamping with a kin of the Rwalá numbering less than thirty tents fell in love with a Rwala woman. After a short time war broke out between the Sba'a and the Rwala, and the Sbê'i returned to his own people. During the campaign, on riding across the previous camping place, he put his memories into this poem, which I heard from my companion Blejhân eben Meṣreb.

Verse 1. The *ženn* are low rectangular litters for women and children. The *neğe'* is a camp numbering less than thirty tents. 2. *Žedwa* is a track. *As-salaf ježdi al-mezâhîr*: the warriors on horses and camels indicate and prepare the way for the camels carrying the tents and supplies. 3. *Ahl ar-rbâ'* are the owners of the tents with a special compartment for the men. In the smaller tents there is only a corner reserved for the men, while the large tents are cut by a dividing partition into compartments for the men (visitors and guests) and for the women. 5. *Ji'âležen al-'anne*: in their high spirits they chew or champ the bit. *Zowm* means strength or endurance. The riders are so drunken with the lust of war that their mares by their neighing remind them to pay heed. 6. *'Arṣa* means a row of warriors riding in front of the chief and shouting the battle cry, *naḫâwa*, which among the Sba'a is: "*Ḥajjâl al-'arfa sbê'i*, the rider protecting the 'Arfa is a Sbê'i." A Sbê'i is a member of the tribe of the Sba'a, who call their herds 'Arfa.

1. *Abči ḥali jâ nâs mâni bmaljûm*
w-azonn min jabči ḥaleh mâ jiljâmi
2. *ğit al-mrâḥ w-ṣâr bel-ḳalb maḷ'ûm*
manâzel al-ḫullân ḥom w-al-'amâmi
3. *ḥâḍa mešabb an-nâr w-al-ḥafr maḷlûm*
marka' dlâlen mut'abâten aš-šwâmi
4. *w-hâği merâbaṭ ḫejlahom dâjmen dûm*
ḥoḳb al-'ujûn mrowba'ât al-hwâmi

2: Mus:1 5-4,6 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

and calls together the idlers from all sides to utter their greetings and to reply to greetings, only in order that as soon as possible they may gain the favor of those present. 4. Nine grains of cardamom are ground together with a pinch of

FIG. 29 FIG. 30

FIGS. 29, 30—Pack camels, *al-mazhûr*, on the march (see p. 76).

saffron and mixed with the boiled coffee. The *hejl*, cardamom, gives the coffee a peculiar bitter taste, and the saffron makes it yellow in color. The coffee, when it has been allowed to stand and has been strained off, *mrawwaḳa*, is poured into beautiful cups, *as-snâfi*. *Har-raǧǧâl snâfi* means "this man is handsome, perfect." 5. *Ṣinijje* is the name of the shallow decorated metal dish upon which the cups are placed; such dishes were originally brought from China and hence were known as *ṣîni*. *'Oddah* for *'odah* (or *'odha*). He who protects the fugitives is to receive an additional drink of coffee. *Aḵfow* means "made their escape, retreated." 6. *Trâd* is the term for actual warfare. In the midst of the most dangerous and fierce fighting the girls encourage the warriors with words and gestures. With loosened hair and bared breasts they dash on she-camels where the danger is greatest, shout to their lovers and friends, remind the former of favors received, and threaten to desert to the enemy should they be disappointed

2: Musil S-4,5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

by their own people. 8. *Ṣâbûr* are the camel riders who during the raid ward off the attacks of the owners of the captured herds. 9. *Mirkâẓahom* signifies the galloping of the horse riders who from ambush attack the enemy engaged

726
539x

Fig. 31—Pack camels, *al-maṣhûr*, on the march (see p. 76).

with the *ṣâbûr*. 10. Most of the coffee is to go to the owner of the tent, who entertains the warriors returning from a raid, *ma'âwîd* (or *menâčîf*), with genuine unaffected kindness. For whether the raid has been successful or not, on the return from it all are hungry, riders as well as animals, because as a rule every raid lasts much longer than was planned. 11. *Al-čeǧûb al-ehlâfi* is the term applied to a man who pretends to rejoice at some news, while in reality he is seething with wrath. It is used of the host who embraces and kisses the guest, but does not give enough to eat either to the guest or to his animals.

[152]
272
539x

1. *Kum saw mâ jeǧmod 'alâ-ṗ-ṗên jâ ḏijâb bedlâl jeddewn al-bṭûṭ al-maḥâčîb*
2. *w-ehmes elja min al-'araḳ fowkha ḏîb w-estaden mâ jeǧǧeb 'alejk al-ḥerârîb*

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Ryala MD4

Verse 1. *Mâ jeğmed* means "that which adheres (sticks) and colors." The Bedouins prefer coffee which leaves dark-yellow stains on the white cups. The wild geese are called *maḥâdîb* from their fat bulging backs. 2. The roasting is finished when the fine drops resembling sweat disappear from the coffee beans. 3. Through prolonged use the inside of the mortar becomes very shiny, as does the spot outside pressed by the knees of the person working the pestle. *Jel'i*, the mortar bows because the beater inclines it from side to side when shaking off the coffee that sticks to its sides. *Dubb ad-dahr* means "as is the custom, life long." 4. *Čaffat aṣ-ṣîn* is the inside of a porcelain cup, *wars* (or *kurkub*) the plant from which the yellow dye is made. *Šfûf* was explained to me as lips, but it can also mean the stuff for a dress. 5. The first cup should go to the *'ažîd*, or leader of the troop. *Mafras* signifies the spot where the enemy's horses were repulsed when trying to free the captured herds. 6. *Ẓabẓâb* is the term applied to the warriors mounted on horses. If the enemy attack a migrating tribe they are opposed by the *salaf*, a troop of horsemen who attempt to drive them from the camels which carry the tents, household goods, supplies, and women and children. If the enemy is numerically stronger, the troop opposing them may soon be scattered, in which case only the bravest will persist in defending the camels of the different families. 7. The owner of the tent, who sets meat before the hungry fighters on their return from a raid, is entitled to the most coffee. 8. *Wafel* is the twice-boiled coffee, which not only leaves no dark-yellow stains on the white porcelain but is almost wholly gray, *šâb*. It is good enough for such visitors, *mela*, as press, *raṣṣâṣe*, into the men's compartment. Although they see that they are depriving the more esteemed guests and the tired fighters of their places, and that the host looks at them with an unfriendly eye, yet they do not leave the tent. At last the short stick, *miḥ'âb*, such as is used for urging on and driving away the donkeys, must be applied to them. 9. If the alarm cry is sounded, a true Bedouin instantly arms himself with his best weapon and runs to help, *jifza'*, his attacked countrymen, but a scamp of the sort just described will only snatch up a thick stake used for poking the fire, *miṣlâb*, thinking he can scare the enemy with that. *Sâheğîn* (or *târečîn*) *al-muğîlîb* are those who are unmindful of their duties towards their clan and tribe and are conceited braggarts, *kbârîn al-anfos*.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

The poet was Eben 'Ablân of the 'Adwân tribe; the reciter, Mindîl al-Ḳaṭ'i. Eben 'Ablân reproaches Nimr with doing nothing but mourn for his wife.

Verse 1. *Mela'* are people not remarkable in any way. 2. *Frûḫ al-ǧerûmi* are young falcons who never leave their prey even though it crawls into the thorns to hide. 3. *Meẓâhîr* are she-camels carrying the chattels of the moving clan. As a rule they are led by the women, who beckon to the youths to defend them when attacked by the enemy. The youths utter their alarm cry and throw the enemy from their saddles, so that the mares run around without their riders. Such mares are called *amrâǧ*. The young men defending the laden camels are considered the real heroes, because the enemy will always hurl themselves at these animals when they have scattered the warriors who opposed them first. The fall of one of these youths is considered a serious loss to the tribe.

Elopements

Hîh jâ râ'i-l-bakrat al-ḫaz'ali
wuddi-rčab ma'ak mâr abûj jez'ali.

Hail to thee, who ridest the young she-camel captured from the Ḫaz'al!
I would fain ride with thee, but my father is angry.

The father will not let his daughter wed her lover. Ḫaz'al (for Ḫazâ'el) is the name of a tribe which camps on the lower Euphrates.

Wa' hêh jâ râ'i-l-bakrat an-nâjife
wuddi-rčab ma'ak mâr ana ḫâjife.

Ah, hail to thee, who ridest the she-camel taller than all others!
I would gladly ride along with thee but am afraid.

The maiden fears the fickleness of the lover, who intends to elope with her.

Jâ solejmân ḳalbî mḫâlef
'alleḳ al-ḥebb al-aǧnebijje
mâ ḫala-ṭ-ṭowb fowḳ ar-radâjef
w-al-ǧa'ad lejjeten fowḳ lejje.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

831 x
639 + The poet was Fejṣal al-ʿAnḳari; the reciters, Mḥammad al-Ḳaẓîb, Ǧwâd al-ʿÂni, and Ḥmâr abu ʿAwwâd. Turki eben Ḥmejd eben ʿArejʿer, the chief of the Beni Ḥâled, camping by the Persian Gulf in the territory of al-Ḥasa, had a good friend in Fejṣal al-ʿAnḳari, the elder of a small village near al-Baṣra. Fejṣal negotiated in Turki's name with the authorities, sent him foodstuffs, cloth, arms, and ammunition, advanced him money, and took in exchange camels and horses, which he sold to Persia and India. With the approach of the mid-summer season, *al-ḳejẓ*, Fejṣal used to leave his village with his servants for a change of air on a visit to Turki; *bwaḳt al-ḳejẓ jiṭlaʿ ʿend al-bedw jebaddel hawa*. The latter had a daughter, Fejṣal a son, and the fathers agreed together that their children should marry. It happened that at the beginning of mid-summer both Fejṣal and his son came to Turki for a long visit. On the first day an old fat she-camel was killed in their honor. On the next day the Bedouins arranged an equestrian display, *leʿeb al-ḥejl*, depicting a fight with the enemy, in which both Fejṣal and his son took part, the women standing by their tents, meanwhile, to watch the riders circling around the camp. A female relative of Turki's daughter called her attention to Fejṣal's son's performance, praising his strength and dexterity. The girl's answer, however, was: "Let him be gone from us! A rider from a village is fit only for trade, *kubbih ʿanna ḥajjâl al-eǧra zejn at-taṣfîḥ*," and she would not hear of becoming the mother of settlers. This caused much laughter among the other women who heard the words; they shouted them from tent to tent, and before long even the children cried: "*Ḥajjâl al-eǧra zejn at-taṣfîḥ*." This insult naturally pained old Fejṣal deeply, especially coming from the girl whom he had selected for the wife of his brave son, and he made preparations to leave, but Turki succeeded in appeasing him.

Soon after this incident Turki's herds were suddenly attacked by the Fẓûl, a kin of the Ẓefîr tribe. Responding to the alarm cries, the riders hastened to defend the herds but encountered superior numbers and were slowly beaten back to the camp. In order to raise the courage and perseverance of his warriors Turki had a fancy litter fastened to a
● [726] she-camel, in which his daughter had to seat herself. A virgin sitting in fancy litters and inciting warriors to fight is called 'Aṭfa', the same name being also applied to the litters. Throw-

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Chattering and evildoing,
I would fain, when a slanderer comes to the Arabs,
Take his measure and make my dearest ready,
So that we might saddle our strong she-camels, mount
And ride directly for al-Ḥôr and Ṣfajje. [them,

The lover wants to settle with the slanderer and then depart with his beloved, Nîra, for the inner desert. The price Nîra's kin ask for her is very high; in order to pay it, the lover wishes for a hundred yellow she-camels.

Ačileh means "take his measure, settle with him"; *učajjel*, prepare, make ready, load, weigh. Al-Ḥôr is a depression in the center of al-Ḥamâd; the Ḥabra Ṣfajje is located there.

Jâ zejd lâ taẓreb al-maḥbûb
hw ṣâḥebi w-ent ḳowmâni
ḥowse low žaržarat aṭ-ṭowb
lâ jâ baʿad kill ḥajjâni.

O Zejd, do not beat my dear one!
She is my friend, thou mine enemy.
When Ḥowse lifts her garment,
Oh, that I may live longer than the whole kin!

Ṣâḥeb means a friendly tribe, *ḳowmâni* a hostile one. *Žaržarat aṭ-ṭowb*: she raises the dress covering her breasts in such a way that they show through the enlarged slit. If a girl or a woman wants to encourage her kinsmen to the greatest bravery in a dangerous fight, she does so not by words alone but also by significant deeds. So, for instance, she opens her dress on the breast as a sign of how she means to reward the bravest. Her lover then forgets everything else, only wishing not to perish in the fight, in order that he may enjoy the promised reward. *Lâ jâ baʿad* means "Oh, that I may not be absent, that I may not die." *Ḥajjân* are the kinsfolk, who keep together even in a fight.

Jâ wanneti wannejtaha
w-an-nâs mâ darjaw baha
lâ wâḥani min ǧâẓaʿaha
bên al-berîm w-ṭawbaha.

This is the lament which I utter,
And none knows of it;

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The maiden longs for a word from her lover, who has gone with some traders in camels to Egypt, and urges the messenger carrying letters for the chief to hurry.

Zâ'û min al-'ejd w-mežfîni
w-mnaššerîn ad-dallâli
'allemi bihom bel-maḳâṭîni
w-mrakkezîn al-maḳâmi.

After the holiday they departed, but in the opposite [direction,
Their best clothes donning. [to stay
Let me hear of their news, that they have encamped
And have erected a water hoist.

The maiden learns where her lover's kin have encamped. *Al-'ejd* is the holiday of *aẓ-ẓaḥijje*, when a she-camel is sacrificed by the Bedouins to every member of their kin who has died in the past year. *Mežfin* means that they have not followed the other Arabs in their forward movement but have taken the opposite direction. They encamped by a watering place and for a long period, hence *maḳâṭîni*. The word *meḳṭân* designates a place where the Bedouins make a prolonged stay in summer time; thus *ḳaṭanna 'ala-l-ḳâra* means "we camped a long time in al-Ḳâra." *Maḳâm* is the wooden apparatus for raising water, fastened above the edge of a deep well (see my *Arabia Deserta*, Fig. 35, p. 161). Such an apparatus is arranged only when the Arabs intend to stay at that particular well for some time. On that occasion they take out their best clothes and the women dress in their finest, *munaššerîn ad-dallâl*.

Ed'û râ'i-š-šowše
an-nûri mâ ḥala' howšeh
jâ mušarreden lar-radi bowšeh
jâ howš at-turk jâ howšeh.

Wish long life to him with the short hair,
To an-Nûri — Oh, how graceful is he in the fight,
He who frees the herds captured by a wretch!
Ah, the fight with the Turks, ah, his fight with them!

Ed'û for *jâ ṭawîl al-'omr*. When going to battle every rider bares his head. The kerchief rests on his shoulders; the weight of the head rope hanging round the neck holds it to the body. *Šowše* means short, unbraided hair on the

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Ṣîta's mother, Turkijje was the daughter of the head chief of the Fed'ân. Ṣîta's father, Saṭṭâm, usually selected a place for his camping ground where his clans were exposed to the greatest danger. Such a place is called *sâḳa*. His wife's father was a hero of renown whom no troop of riders could resist. 852 539x

Ṛazâlen daššakom A gazelle ran in amongst you
mâ hâb And feared not.
jâ bint muḫazzaʿ O thou daughter of him who chopped off
al-arḳâb. Heads!

Ṣîta was not frightened even when the enemy succeeded in entering the camp. She inherited her father's character.

Jâ ṣîta bintena-r-razne
čeṭîr al-mâl jašrîha
želîl al-mâl waʿ ḥazneh.

O Ṣîta, our cold-blooded daughter!
Only a rich man could buy her,
While a poor one would, alas, grieve vainly for her.

Ṣîta was both astute and cool-tempered. At times when an-Nûri trembled for his life Ṣîta watched over him day and night to prevent his being poisoned or assassinated in his own tent. Such a woman can be bought only by a rich man.

Ahal ṣîta jiḥellûn
sukkâra mâ jiḏellûn
ʿala-s-sâḳât juʿajjûn
w-hal ṣaḥnen jiḥoṭṭûn.

Ṣîta's kinsmen fall upon the enemy as if on sheep for
Like drunken men, nothing can frighten them; [sacrifice,
Careless they are of the most dangerous spots,
And their dishes they constantly fill.

The warriors act in the battle just as if they were merely slaughtering sheep, *jiḥellûn*. *Sâḳât* are places exposed to the direct attack of the enemy and therefore highly dangerous. A chief of renown not only ignores this danger but even selects localities of that kind in order to avert the danger from his people and to destroy the enemy himself. Thus praise is given [726 622]

524 *šẓâẓ*, on the highest stone near by, taps it with his large peg
857 enough to make it fly up a little, and when in the air gives it a good blow so as to make it fly to the other players who wait at a distance of about thirty or forty paces. Every one of them tries to hit the flying sharp peg with his own peg in order to send it back. As long as no one succeeds, the peg is returned to the first boy, who continues to bat it until one of his comrades finally strikes it and takes his place. When striking at the *šẓâẓ* peg the head or shoulders of a player often come in contact with it, with consequences easy to imagine.

Many a kerchief is torn to ribbons in the game called *dehdwa*. One boy rolls a large stone down a slightly inclined plane, while the others try to stop it, *'akašha*, with their kerchiefs. The one succeeding in this is entitled to roll it, *jedahdîha*.

'Aḳê 'aḳab is a game in which all the boys run for the goal, about a hundred paces away. He who reaches it first shouts: "*'aḳê 'aḳab*," a command for the others to turn and run back to the starting point. The first boy to reach it now calls out the same words, "*'aḳê 'aḳab*," and flies with the others to the goal again. This is repeated until all are exhausted. Finally the one to reach the goal first exclaims: "A pile of wood, *korkob ḥašab*," and sinks to the ground; the others follow his example, lie still for a while, but then begin to kick and strike out all around regardless of whom they hit.

DITTIES SUNG BY GIRLS

539x The girls have no such games. Occasionally at night they
857 form two choirs and alternately sing, *jesemran*, various ditties
533 called *summejr*:

Tafawwelû bel-faẓa	For a good sign take a great plain,
jâ-lli ṭalab fâlî	O all ye who ask me for a good sign!
fâli rŝêden w-ar-rašed	Fortunate is my sign, for luck
ṭajjeb al-fâli.	Is the best of all signs ye may want.

539x When the women and girls are about to start their *sum-*
857 *mejr*, the men and youths gather not far off. Before a raid
777 or any act of importance every man observes the first word
726 uttered by the woman or girl dear to him. That word they

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take to be their sign or omen, *fâl*, and try to guess from it whether their enterprise will meet with success or not. Knowing this the girls begin with the ditty quoted above. A *faẓa'*, or vast plain where the Bedouin cannot be ambushed, is to him a good sign. Better than any sign, however, is the luck itself or the successful result.

Enḥowderû les-summejr
w-az-zemel bel-misrâḥ
min hw jehedd aṭ-ṭejr
ma'lûḳ ḳlejbeh râḥ
jelfi 'ala marteh
jâ niğmet al-miṣbâḥ
erḥi ṭrejf as-sejr
žîfi 'ala-l-mebṭâḥ.

Gather for the *summejr*,
For the pack camels are out in the pasture.
Who is that training the hunting falcon?
The falcon to whom his heart clung disappeared and
Will soon reach its wife.
O morning star!
Loosen the end of thy leather belt
And stand leaning against the long litter pole.

The girls and women invite everybody to their entertainment, *summejr*, as it is unnecessary to get up so early next morning, since the chief's pack camels are not yet back from the pasture. They hear some one training his hunting falcon and later pity him, because the falcon has flown away and returned to its wife. When about to move they call out to the prettiest woman of the camp to stand up in her litter and shed light all around her like the morning star.

The word *enḥowderû*, gather down, come down together, is used because the *summejr* is always held in a low piece of ground protected against the wind. *Erḥi ṭrejf as-sejr* means "loosen the end of thy leather belt." Every woman wears a belt of small leather strips on her bare body. On entering a litter she loosens this belt in order not to be incommoded by it on the journey. *Žîfi*, stand leaning, for *žîfi*.

Jâ rabbi jâ ḥâlež al-lejl
hât al-maṭar min saḥâbeh

will be slain, their herds perish. The chief Ṣaḳr eben Meṣreb, a famous leader of countless raids, was greatly incensed against both the sorcerers and their disciples because of their incessant greed and was once heard to say: "Oh, may Allâh rid me of you all! If you have enough, you disturb everybody's rest by your music and your foolery; if you are hungry, there is no being rid of you, you beggars; *low šeba'tu awḏejtu w-low ǧi'tu arẓejtu.*" On hearing this the insulted sorcerers called a meeting and one of them, Mnâḥi eben Dabbâr, cursed Ṣaḳr in the name of all present. A few days later the chief was dead.

Of the sorcerer's curse the Bedouins stand in much fear. If anybody hears that a seer has cursed him, he makes haste to find the seer and, falling on his face before the powerful man, crosses his hands behind his back as if fettered and says: "I ask the protection of thine ancestor and am willing to bring a lawful sacrifice as a gift to him, *ana dâḫel 'ala ǧeddekom w-ana ḥâṭṭ ḏebiḥat ǧeddekom mowhebha mowhebe šara'ijje.*" The sorcerer answers: "Agreed, it has arrived; *tâmma w-jâmma.*" The animal selected for the sacrifice is killed by the sorcerer at the edge of the tent, with its head turned south, while the sorcerer says: "O Allâh, this sacrifice is destined for my ancestor." Then he besmears with the blood of the sacrificed animal the center pole of the tent and the strip which strengthens its roof, *ṭarîžet al-bejt*; the meat he and his disciples eat, and the accursed is relieved.

At the time when this was written (1909) the following persons were recognized as true seers: men: Mnâḥi eben Dabbâr, Ṛannâm eben Ǧel'ûd, Ṣajjâḥ eben Ǧlejdân, Za'al eben 'Awwâd; women: 'Ešba bint Hmezi, Baṭḥa bint 'Awwâd, and Dlejjil bint Mâzi.

A sorcerer can give information whether and for how long it is going to rain; whether a wife will bear a boy or a girl; whether the young produced by the mare or camel will be a male or a female; whether a raid will succeed, etc.

[726] War expeditions on a large scale are always accompanied by a sorcerer who instructs the commander in anything he may undertake. The latter asks the sorcerer's advice only on occasions when he is at a loss what to do. Then the seer stimulates himself with music and works himself into an ecstasy, which helps him hear the angel speak and proclaim the will of Allâh.

721 asleep. Both men and dogs sleep under cover in order to prote themselves against the dew and chill. An attack launched this time is called *bejât* and is dishonorable, as the surprise enemy cannot defend himself.

●726 The order to attack is given by the leader with the word "Gain success, O ye looters! *efleḥû jâ ṛânimîn*," and by gesture of his hand to the cavalry to advance. For their par they shout: "O Allâh, by Allâh himself!" or: "O Allâh, th will be done! *jâ-llâh 'ala bâbak*," and throw themselves o the herds without paying attention to the herdsmen. Ever one tries to reach an animal with his spear, calling at th same time on his comrades to witness that it was he wh captured it; he then drives it before him to a second an third, which he also makes his own. A long spear is very usefu in this kind of work. Sometimes they succeed in surrounding and capturing all the herds, but usually some of the camel shy and gallop away madly. These animals can never be over taken by the attackers unless they run towards their las quarters, for frightened camels will not stop until quite ex hausted.

704 The captured herds are driven by the cavalry to the
725 leader, who waits for them with the camel riders. There the cavalry divides. One half, armed with spears, drives the booty to the last quarters, the other, armed with revolvers, pistols, and rifles conceals itself in some suitable spot between the leader and the camp of the enemy. These hidden warriors are called *čemîn*, the reserve.

Both the reserve and the leader with the camel riders, *ṣâbûr*, wait for the counter attack, *faz'a*, which the enemy usually makes in order to rescue the captured animals and to drive the raiders back. The task of the camel riders, *ṣâbûr*, consists in opposing the sortie, and in this they are supported by the reserve in their rear. If the sortie is beaten back and the enemy dispersed, the *ṣâbûr* fall on the camp, taking all the tents there with everything in them.

721 However, it is only on rare occasions that the enemy
704 can be taken wholly by surprise, because the chief of every
726 camp follows the rule of sending out riders on camels, called *ṭullû'*, to observe the country on all sides. They usually start before sunrise, ascend the highest hillocks, survey the neighborhood in all directions, and do not return till after sunset.

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Should the pastures be more than twenty kilometers from the camp, the herds are accompanied by a troop of cavalry, *ǧanab*, who stay with them all day and also return only after sunset. Besides this, on all the highest elevations at different points around the pastures and between them and the camp, sentinels lie hidden behind piles of stones. These keep a sharp outlook for anything suspicious that may appear on the horizon. If something unusual is noticed by one of the mounted pickets, *ṭullû'*, he ties his kerchief to the muzzle of his rifle, waves it in the direction of whatever has aroused his suspicion, and shouts at the top of his voice:

"At their backs, O riders, an attack threatens you! *ẓhawrahen* [sic] *jâ-hla-l-ḫejl 'alejkom ṛâra.*"

This shout is repeated and the direction indicated by the next sentinel, so that the whole camp is put on its guard in a few minutes. The girls and women hasten to open the iron fetters on the mares' forelegs, while the men put on cartridge belts and seize their rifles. One rider after another speeds in the direction from which the danger is expected, singing *ḥda'* ditties on the way. Those who own no mare wait, weapons in hand, for the next report. If the alarm cry, *ṣijâḥ*, proves false and thus that the man who gave it, *ṣâjeḥ*, called for help, *fazza' al-'arab*, unnecessarily, the sentinel shouts: "Forgiveness, *al-'âfje*," and the cavalry who came out return home in groups, singing. But if the enemy really appears and is near at hand, the warriors who have no horses run from the camp afoot to help the cavalry. In case the enemy flees and the cavalry cannot overtake them, they return to the camp, pick their riding camels from among the herds, saddle them, load them with water bags and food, and start as the *ṭalab* in pursuit of the hostile troop.

Should the rescuing cavalry who make the counter attack, *faz'a*, find out that the attackers are too numerous, they dispatch messengers to the neighboring camps, who shout from afar: "Come out to our help quickly! Your comrades have been robbed! *efza'û rab'akon. wuḫedû.*" As this cry is repeated by the sentinels of the other camps or by the herdsmen, it is often unnecessary for the messenger to reach the camp itself. He stops and waits for the first riders to respond to his call, and with them he then gallops to assist his people.

If, for instance, Eben Ša'lân is informed that a strong

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721 enemy is approaching, he orders all his tribal divisions to get
704 ready. Soon troop after troop headed by their chiefs arrive
726 at his camp, defile before his tent, *je'arẓûn*, and shout their battle cry:

"Before thine eyes, *'ajnâk*, O chief! The rider protecting the 'Alja camel herds rides before thine eyes, and that rider is a Rwejli, *'ajnâk ḫajjâl al-'alja rwejli.*"

703 The battle cry, *naḫâwa*, uttered before the chief is in-
726 tended to rouse both his courage and that of his warriors, *ješiddûn maḥzam aš-šejḫ w-juḳawwûn* (sic) *'azmahom*. As a proof that they will not desert their fellow tribesman they defile before him on horseback; this is called *'arẓa*. The *'arẓa* is always connected with the *naḫâwa*. Without a *naḫâwa* there is no *'arẓa*.

Whenever Eben Ša'lân sets out to rescue his captured herds, he shouts to the enemy from afar:

"Oh, how many times have we freed herds like these from enemies like you. The rider protecting the 'Alja herds is a Rwejli! By Allâh himself! This day is the most ruinous of all days for you. Oh, how far are your kinsfolk from you! *Jâ mâ fakkejna miṭlehen min miṭlekom ḫajjâl al-'alja rwejli w-allâh hal-jowm aḳrad al-ajjâm 'alejkom w-ba'ad ahalkom al-jowm 'alejkom*. All of you must perish, your kins will not come to help you!"

If the victorious attackers expect a second counter attack, *faz'a*, stronger in numbers, before hiding themselves their cavalry defile before the commander and the camel riders and shout their battle cry:

"Before thine eyesight, O chief! Before your eyes, O comrades! The rider protecting the 'Alja is a Rwejli!"

The commander answers: "We shall not desert each other! *lâ ḫala' w-lâ 'adam*," and is the first to throw himself on the enemy, with the words:

"If Allâh grants luck to us we shall capture your mares as we have already taken your camels!" for nothing inspires the troop so much as the bravery of its leader. On the other hand, if he betrays hesitation, all is lost. If the leader on his part notices that his men are wavering, he admonishes them with the battle cry:

"Before your eyes, O comrades! The rider protecting 'Alja is I, So-and-So. I fill even heroes with fear, I, So-and-So, *ḏa"âr as-sebâja w-ana flân eben flân*." If they answer: "Enough

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now and grace! *kafw w-na'am*," he is positive that they will not desert him.

If he sees a man fleeing, the leader cries: "Shame on thee for running away! Thou art not worthy to mount a she-camel! Thy daughter shall not marry lest she bear a scoundrel like thee, who desertest thy comrades!" If more try to run away, the leader shouts: "Shame on you, ye runaways! Face about, come back, ye are going in the wrong direction!" and beats them with the flat of his saber. This is effective. First one and then another rejoin him, howling: "At them! At them! O So-and-So! say not afterwards that thou hast not seen me throwing myself at them! at them! at them! *fowkahom 'alej-hom*." If it seems as if the enemy would win, the girls, if present, with words and gestures encourage the warriors to persevere. With their breasts bared and hair loosened they ride on camels where the greatest danger appears, call to their friends and to those dear to them, remind them of amorous moments spent together, and threaten to join the enemy if their own people disappoint them.

Many, especially the younger warriors, then with the left hands raise the hem of their cloaks before their eyes and, with the saber or dagger in the right hand, throw themselves on the enemy. During the fight they shout: "Away! Tremble! At you! at you! O faithless people! Ye shall not escape. We came from afar to get you!" And then the fight changes into a series of duels. Personal bravery, though greatly limited by the use of firearms, may even now be exhibited.

If the attackers learn that there is in the camp to be assailed a fighter feared for his bravery, they prepare to destroy him. The evening before the attack the leader takes a cup of black coffee in his hand and says:

"This cup is filled with the blood of So-and-So. Who will drink it?"

If one of the men present takes the cup and drinks the coffee with the words "I am drinking the blood of So-and-So," he is obliged to meet the aforesaid hero in a duel. During the fight he asks again and again:

"O riders, who of you has seen So-and-So?"

If the hero is not among the fighters on that day, a comrade of his will answer: "O thou son of an honorable family, he is not here. If he were, thou mayst be sure he would not hide from thee. But here is one who will take his

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703 place. Only come nearer with her [the mare]! *Jâ walad al-*
●726 *ḥalâl mâ hw ḥâẓer lâ čân ḥâẓer mâ čân ittaḳa' 'ank ḥâẓer min jesedd 'anneh mâr žarrebha ğâj.*"

But if the hero happens to be present, he says: "Oh, who is inquiring for So-and-So? This is he. Thou hast reached him. *Jâ nâšeden 'an flân hâḍa hw waṣelt ḥâẓer.*"

The comrades of both warriors then stop fighting, the better to observe the result of the duel, *mulâka'*. Both duellists first utter the battle cry of their tribe, adding: "Never say: 'He has surprised or tricked me.' *Lâ tḳul ṛaṭarni w-bâḳni.* Brace up now and defend thyself! *ḫoḏ ḥaẓarak w-enfa' ḥâlak.* Oh, how do I frighten heroes! Thou sneeredst at me and thy lips are twitching!" A duel always ends with the death of one of the warriors. Of the victor the tale quickly spreads: "He fought, *tanâṭaḥ*, with So-and-So."

726 Whoever catches sight of the chief during the battle and
782 longs to defeat him, cries out: "O Allâh, help me to defeat the chief and I will sacrifice a fat she-camel to thee! *jâ allâh baš-šejḫ w-fâṭer.*"

266 It is a fact that there are still many who drink the blood
727 of the stricken enemy. 'Awde abu Tâjeh shouted: "O Allâh, give Da'sân to me that I may drink his blood!" Da'sân al-Hemš was a brave Šarâri warrior. Meeting him in a battle, 'Awde abu Tâjeh with a well-aimed bullet swept him from the saddle, jumped down on him, and, putting his mouth to the wound, drank his blood. Then he cut open his breast, tore out the still beating heart, and ate it.

726 A raider who wishes either for his brother or for him-
782 self to capture a fine mare on which the enemy is still sitting, calls out: "Oh, for the luck of So-and-So! [here he names his brother or himself], help me to throw this rider off his mare and I will sacrifice a she-camel! *jâ baḥat flân beha-l-ḳlâ'a w-fâṭer.*" Then he shoots at the enemy, cuts him with his sabre or stabs him with his spear, and throws him from the saddle, *ḳalla'eh 'anha.*

726 A warrior coming face to face with an enemy by whose
628 hand his father, brother, or another relative has fallen, shouts at him: "O So-and-So, I wish to avenge my father! *jâ flân jâ beṭarârât abûj.*" If the other is not afraid he will answer: "Away with thee who rememberest a debt and askest for a settlement! *tḥasa jâ ḥâfẓ ad-dên w-ṭâlbeh.*" But if he is afraid he begs: "I ask thy protection! Shouldst thou refuse it and

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avenge thy father, the fire of hell will be thy punishment; *daḫîlak bên abûk w-an-nâr*," or: "Higher than thy hand is the hand of Allâh, who is sure to prevent blood flowing from this neck of mine." If the one who is challenged does not feel guilty, he corrects the other: "O thou, suspect me not! Seek him not with me at any hour of the day or of the night; for it was not I who cut his skin and made his son an orphan! *Jâ flân lâ-tâhem mâ leh ʿendi medâr w-lâ sâʿat al-lejl w-lâ sâʿat an-nahâr w-anni mâ šaḳḳejt leh ǧild w-lâ ajtamt leh wild.*" Then, when the avenger looks at him more closely, he may answer: "And I do, by Allâh, believe it; *w-ana ballâh žanaʿat.*"

He who sees certain death before him asks for pardon in these words: "Give pardon, O rider! *emnaʿ emnaʿ jâ ḫajjâl.*"

The man addressed will answer: "Come hither and thou wilt save thy neck. Come hither, Allâh lies on thee," or: "Dismount before the face of So-and-So" — naming himself. The suppliant, coming nearer, says: "'*Aṭni allâh*, give me Allâh," or "*Ḥoṭṭ ʿalejji allâh*, lay on me Allâh!" When this is done, the pardoned man says: "'*Aṭâni allâh w-ʿaṭajteh allâh ʿan al-bowḳ*, he assured me by Allâh and I assured him by Allâh against treachery."

He then surrenders his arms and most of his clothing and receives from his captor either a kerchief or head rope, accompanied by the words: "Here, take my kerchief (or my rope) and tell any one who approaches thee that thou hast been pardoned by So-and-So, *hâk ḳṣâṣti* (*ʿaṣâbti*) *w-alli jeǧîk ḫabbereh ana manîʿ flân.*"

His mare or she-camel is taken by the victor, *mâneʿeh*, or the latter lets some comrade keep her for him a while and returns to the fight. The pardoned one waves the kerchief or the rope, crying: "I am the *manîʿ* of So-and-So." If both himself and his animal are wounded, his pardoner, *mâneʿ*, conducts him to his own party where assistance will be given him, or else the *mâneʿ* will allow him to return home at once. Should he live too far away, he is furnished with a she-camel, water bag, food, and a reliable guide, but must give his word of honor to return everything or to give compensation.

When a comrade of the victor is about to return home, *jenḳeṣ*, the victor says to him: "The man who stands before thee was pardoned by me. Conduct him to my relatives!"

He who asks no pardon while in danger is generally killed, *elja' mâ mâna' endabaḥ*. There are many who hide, concealing

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727 their arms and clothing among the rocks or in the sand, and at night manage to creep to some tent. If they see a little boy or girl, they salute the child; if the salutation is repeated or if they succeed in entering a tent, they are saved. But if the fugitive is seen by an adult man, he may be killed despite his crying: "Give pardon! *emna'*." For he should have asked for it during the fight, not now, they say.

Sometimes, however, the commander-in-chief declares that no pardon will be given. "O comrades, behold! the granting of pardon to them is abolished; *jâ ǧemâ'a tarâhom maḳṭû' al-man' 'anhom.*"

726 Frequently the fight lasts many hours. If the attacked party succeeds in scattering the horse riders, it then usually surrounds all the camel riders, *ḥâlow 'ala-l-ǧejš killeh*, captures them, and starts in pursuit of the raiding party which is driving off the captured herds. During the pursuit they encourage each other with the words: "At them! at them! *fowḳahom fowḳahom.*" Or: "It has come upon them [i. e. defeat] ê... ê... ê... Hail, I smell the fragrance of So-and-So from their tails. *Râḥat 'alejhom râḥat ê... ê... ê... hejh jâ rîḥat al-flâne bedijûlehen.*" Just as he would allow nothing to keep him away from the maiden of his heart, so he has now to overtake the fleeing enemy.

After the Attack

727 If the rescuing counter attack of the despoiled camp is repulsed by the *ṣâbûr*, camel riders assisted by the *čemîn*, reserve cavalry, the reserve starts in pursuit of the scattered enemy, while the camel riders surround the camp, take from the tents what suits them, roll up the tents, and load all on their camels. The women and children suffer no harm; on the contrary each woman is given at least one she-camel so that with her children she can reach her nearest relatives. The girls beg the raiders: *"E'ḳlû 'alejna*, give us something to fetter," and the she-camel returned to a girl by a raider becomes her property. As the saying is: "A girl's booty is the animals returned to her by the raiders, *časb al-banât 'oḳl al-ḥalâl.*" Should a raider accidentally rob a tent belonging to some fellow tribesman then camping with the enemy, he returns either to him or to his wife everything he has taken, *al-waḥama tarî'*. This is also done when the raiders rob on

Jâ ḍrajjem laḥa!fat 'alejk
ḥoṭemt w-'aḳabk al-felâḥ
min 'oḳob mâ rišak čeṭîr
w-al-jowm mak;ûm al-ǧenâḥ.

O Ḍrajjem! faith, it was measured to thee with the same measure.
A rap on the nose thou hast got, and thy success is gone.
Though many feathers thou hast inherited,
Yet today thy wings are broken for ever.

Faḳḳ al-ǧelam 'ajja jeṣûl
wa' dîreti ṛadaw baha
ešraw lmarat 'ali zebûn
ḥalawh jalbes ṭawbaha.

He opened his shears, refused to attack.
Ah, they occupied my territory!
They purchased a caftan for 'Ali's wife
And made him wear her dress.

Owing to the lack of good rain, there was no pasture in the Rwala territory at one time and consequently no affluence, *dîrt ar-rwala maḥal mâ baha rabî'*, but in the regions inhabited by their enemies, the tribe of Sba'a, the vegetation was luxuriant, *rîf*. So they agreed among themselves, *tawâzaw*, to move into the Sba'a territory, *dîra*, and said: 721 619

"We shall go there and encamp near our relatives, the 'Aneze; *eḥna ntawaǧǧeh ila had-dîra wa-nzel ḥawâli žerîbna 'aneza* (sic). If they accept our friendship we shall become their friends and conclude peace with them, *elja ḳbalaw ṣuḥebna ṣâḥebnâhom wa-tṣâleḥna ma'hom*; if they refuse we will fight them, *w-elja' mâ ḳbalaw aṣ-ṣulḥ willa nḥârebhom*. Either they will take us or we shall take them, drive them out and use the pastures in their territory, and thus save our herds and our own lives; *amma jâḥeḏûna w-amma nâḥeḏhom wa-nhaǧǧeǧhom w-nar'a al-mar'a alli bdîrthom wa-nsaḳḳem ḥalâlna wa-n'îš.*"

Remaining steadfast in this resolve, *ṛaṣabaw 'ala harra'j*, they marched into the Sba'a territory and soon reached the settlement of al-Mîdân, which belongs politically to the administrative district of Ḥoms, *tab' ḥoms*. There the Sba'a and Fed'ân tribes were already encamped and ready to fight. The Rwala, halting not far from them, at once formed a war 721 726

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

721 camp, *tenâwaḥaw menâḥ*. All camel herds were driven into
726 one line, and each animal was made to kneel and was fettered. The women and children sat down by their herds, while the men, posting themselves between them and the enemy, waited for the attack. This situation lasted for four days. On the fifth day, when a few young camels had already died of hunger, the Rwala assailed the Sba'a and Fed'ân with such fury that they drove them out from their tents in flight, *'addawhom ila wara-l-bujût*. Some succeeded in loosening the fetters of their camels and in fleeing with them, *minhom min ḳadar jeṭallek ba'arîneh w-inhazam bih 'ala-l-ḥala*, but others were surprised in this act and captured, *w-minhom min a'ğelûh ar-rağâl 'an taṭlîž ḥalâleh w-ḥâlaw 'alejh ar-rwala*. The Rwala took all the tents with the sheep which they found near them, also many horses and camels, and continued to pasture their animals in that territory undisturbed until the Sba'a finally made peace with them. The Sba'a asked 'Ali al-Fḳiḳi, chief of the 'Ebede division, to join them in assailing the Rwala in order to eject the latter from their territory, but 'Ali refused. Then they sang the preceding ditty about him.

539x *Faḳḳ*, he opened, is an insulting allusion to Fḳiḳi. 'Ali often called himself *al-ğelam*, shears, meaning that he would cut up
291] any hostile raid. *Zebûn* is a garment with narrow sleeves, open in front along its whole length and reaching down to the ankles. It is worn by men over the shirt. *Ṯowb* is a woman's shirt of blue fabric.

Jâ mḥammad jâ ḥedîn aẓ-ẓejf
râ'i-l-wa'îde ğâ' laha
slîmân 'ammar leh sebîl
min ḥufratak wa-dlâlaha.

O Mḥammad! O thou who hast sated thyself with the guest
Who came to the meeting agreed on!
Slîmân has surely well filled his short pipe
At thy fire and did drink from thy coffeepots.

539x Muḥammad eben Smejr sent word to his enemy Slîmân
721 eben Meršed, the head chief of the Ḳmuṣa division of the
726 Sba'a tribe, to come for a smoke to his tent. Slîmân answered that Muḥammad should not expect such a guest with much pleasure. Shortly afterwards Slîmân attacked Muḥammad's camp, scattered his warriors, took all his tents with their supplies, smoked Muḥammad's pipe, and drank coffee from his

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

pots. *Ḥufra* is the pit in which fire is made in the men's compartment of the tent. 539 X 721 726 ●

Slîmân law taḳ'od wa-tšûf
al-'arfa waš ğara laha
bên as-swejda w-al-'ala
ḥalğen tadûr 'ejâlaha.

Slîmân, if thou wouldst only sit down and look [thou wouldst see]
By the 'Arfa herds what has happened to them,
How between as-Swejda and al-'Ala
The she-camels now seek their young.

Slîmân eben Meršed, the chief of the Ḳmuṣa, who call all camel herds "al-'Arfa," made a raid against the Rwala but was defeated and pursued as far as the inner desert. Then, before he could return home, Eben Ša'lân attacked his camp between as-Swejda and al-'Ala and captured many of his herds. The riding camels of Eben Meršed's troop after returning to camp sought for their weaned calves in vain, for the Rwala had driven them away.

Al-mešrefe tarṭan raṭîn
tağâwabat hi w-al-'ala
eben ša'lân aḳâl surûğ
zowden 'ala ḥomṣ w-ḥama'

Al-Mešrefe all the time is jabbering,
Talking with al-'Ala
How Eben Ša'lân loaded corn at Surûğ
More than he would find in Ḥomṣ and Ḥama'.

Surûğ is a settlement between as-Swejda and al-'Ala, inhabited by *fellâḥîn* who cultivate the fields of Eben Meršed's house. Al-Mešrefe is peopled by Circassians, who also own some settlements in al-'Ala. Their language is not understood by the Rwala, hence the phrase: "She [al-Mešrefe] is jabbering, *tarṭan raṭîn*." After defeating the Ḳmuṣa and plundering Eben Meršed's camp, the victorious Rwala took all the corn stored at Surûğ. [563] 539 K

Jâ lâbeti tawen širebt al-kejf
w-al-čabd ğalejna ṣadâh
min 'ağğeten ṣârat 'alejhom
bên as-swejda w-al-'ala'.

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727 765 A sister cries three times: "Alas, woe is me! alas, thou brother of mine!"

A daughter: "Alas, woe is me, alas, thou father of mine!"

Then they sit down, cry till their eyes are dry, and return quietly to their tents. There is no other mourning.

LARGE BATTLES, OR *MANÁḤ*

721 726 The fight called *manâḥ*, as distinguished from the *razw* or raid for booty, is very different. When a stronger tribe wants to possess itself of the territory of a weaker or to increase its fame, *zowd al-i'tibâr*, it moves with all its herds and tents into the territory occupied by the latter, *ṣâl 'alejh ṣowla*, and finally encamps near the main camp of the enemy. The tents form as a rule two long rows, which behind the herds graze; in front of them, within rifle shot, stands the tent of the leader and a few others belonging to his retinue. In these few tents there is nothing except the utensils for making black coffee, meals being prepared in the tents behind. All the mares stand saddled by these war tents, *bujût al-ḥarb*, while the riding camels lie fettered between the other tents. The men on foot are posted right and left of the war tents. Before the attack, the men on foot sometimes hide by the war tents. 721 726 The cavalry attempts to drive the enemy to them and within rifle shot. Before the attack the tribal emblem Abu-d-Dhûr is 703 fastened to a camel which walks in the midst of the bravest youths on horseback. These warriors are accompanied by the prettiest women and girls of the camp, who, with their bosoms bared and hair loosened, keep shouting:

"He who runs away today shall never receive anything from us; *illi ješred al-jowm mâ leh 'endana ḥakk*." Their inspiring high-pitched cries, *zaṛârît*, are heard for a great distance. In order to raise the courage and steadiness of his warriors the chief orders the 'Aṭfa, a fancy litter, to be placed on a she-camel and the handsomest of the girls to take her place in it. Throwing off her kerchief the maiden loosens her hair, unfastens the string holding together the dress under the throat, and seats herself in the litter. Her female companions, likewise, mount she-camels and shouting *zaṛârît* hasten to join the melée in order to encourage their relatives and friends. If it is impossible to withstand the superior strength of the enemy, they call out to the girl on the 'Aṭfa to conceal

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4 .

herself, as the capture of the 'Aṭfa by the enemy would mean the greatest disgrace for both the reigning kin and the whole tribe. Thereupon the girl on the 'Aṭfa drives her animal to her father's tent, makes it kneel here, and either jumps off, unbuckles the litter, and pulls it inside the tent, or flees with it from the camp.

When the tribe is attacked while migrating and the women driving the camels laden with all their household goods fear that the enemy may rob them — the men, meanwhile, being engaged in repelling the attackers — they beg every passing rider to defend them, and the girls, especially, at the top of their voices, call out the names of their sweethearts:

"Bring me So-and-So, ye men! Call So-and-So hither, ye who like to amuse yourselves with girls! I want So-and-So, him of whom all talk!"

If a man passes by whom the woman expects to help her, she cries: "Thou wert praised to me so highly, and yet I have not seen thee do anything today."

When a lover reaches the woman of his heart, she breaks into an inspiring shout, uttering in a high-pitched tremulous voice the syllables of the word *zaṛârît*. The lover greets her: "Oh, how I rejoice before thine eyes! *jâ mâ 'ajnêč wa-fraḥi*," or: "To thy joy, O So-and-So! *farḥateč jâ fiâne*."

Ditties Sung by Defenders of Their Camps

While speeding through the camp or the moving throng in order to repel a hostile attack the men sing short ditties.

Jâ rabb naṭlobak al-huda'
w-as-sitr w-al-'elm al-maliḥ
rab'i medâbis al-'uda'
w-en ḥarrafaw 'enda-ṭ-ṭariḥ.

O Lord! we beg thee for a lucky guidance,
For protection and good news!
My comrades, cudgels for the enemy,
Will not turn their mares save when a rider is thrown from his saddle.

They pray to Allâh for lucky leadership and favorable news about the position of the main force of the enemy, that they may attack at once and thus avoid being taken on the

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

726 539[a] flank. *Dabbûs* is a heavy wooden staff, about 120 centimeters long. *Medâbis* (sing., *medbes*) are youths armed with such staves. They beat the enemy with the staves, pursue those who flee, and if they turn their mares in another direction it is only to save a comrade swept from his saddle. *Ḥarrafaw:* turned their mares about for a new attack, *taḥrîf*. *Ṭariḥ* is a rider thrown from the saddle. He is usually seriously wounded and calls to his comrades to help him. It is considered dishonorable, a shame, *'ajb*, to give a *ṭariḥ* the finishing stroke.

539[k]

Jâ rabb jâ rabb ar-raḥûm
tarmi-l-ḥaja bidijârana
narmi-l-'aša lalli jaḥûm
la'ujûm ǧillen bikârana.

O Lord! our gracious Lord!
Thou wilt pour forth a copious rain on our lands,
Whilst we shall pour forth a supper for the circling birds,
Before the eyes of our big she-camels.

Ḥaja are abundant rains which assure a luxuriant growth of annuals. If the latter cannot thrive, it is because there has been no *ḥaja*, and no affluence, *rabî'*, will follow. [619] *Dire* means territory belonging to one tribe or subject to one emir. Thus Eben Sa'ûd is obeyed by many different tribes, and their territories all form the *dîret eben sa'ûd*. [264] The Rwala eat to satiety only once a day — in the evening — and therefore use the word *'aša*, meaning supper, to express a meal in general. *Jaḥûm*, it circles, is used of a white vulture with reddish wings and yellow beak. It accompanies the warriors on almost all their trips and flies above the battle ground untiringly. *Ǧill* are strong, big she-camels. The enemy tries to capture them, but their defenders come in time to repel the attack.

Habbî lana hbûb ar-riḥ habbî lana
elja' mâ tekâmel ḫejlana.

Blow luck to us, O wave of the wind! blow,
Until our riders are assembled.

The first riders on reaching the attacked herds must, together with the herdsmen, repel the first attack of the enemy; therefore they appeal to the breeze to be favorable to them, for, if they have to fight against the wind which

2:Musil S-4,5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

of Eben Fâjez near Žerjet Abu Gâber and remained there for thirty nights. One fat she-camel was killed in his honor every day. The peace treaty ends with the words: "Interred and buried, *ḥafûr w-defûn*," or: "Interred and buried under a steep bank, *damdûm w-ǧurfen mahdûm*; a steep river bank has fallen upon its shadow, *ǧurfen inhadam ʿala ẓelleh*; no wolf will hurt the sheep any more, *mâ ḏiben jaʿdi ʿala-š-šaʿ*."

The chiefs then grasp each other's right hands and say: "I give thee Allâh and the peace of Allâh. And whoever would deceive thee, may Allâh deceive him! I give thee Allâh against all instigation and calumny. *Aʿṭajtak allâh w-amân allâh w-min bâḳak jebûḳeh allâh aʿṭajtak ʿan al-mesmesijje w-al-maḥâči-r-radijje.*"

THE TRIBAL EMBLEM, ABU-D-DHÛR

The Rwala have no flag of their own. They go on raids without any special device; but when waging war, whether of aggression or defense, that endangers the whole tribe, they take with them a special kind of a litter, called Abu-d-Dhûr or al-Markab. This is perhaps the old decorated litter ʿAṭfa destined originally for the prettiest girl, who used to lead the tribe to the decisive battle. But there is nobody now who can remember that a girl has ever sat in it. The Markab litter (Fig. 59) is constructed of stout poles, the frame being about 90 centimeters high, 270 centimeters long at the top, and 190 centimeters long and about 50 centimeters wide at the bottom. All the poles are wrapped round with ostrich feathers; to the upper poles are tied 12 short pegs, *zerânîž*, with plumes of bent ostrich feathers, *ṛalab*. To be loaded, the Markab is placed in the litter called *ḥaraǧ*, and this is tied to a camel with ropes, *mečârib*. The *ḥaḳab* rope is drawn through under the breast, the *bṭâne* under the belly, the *ṭafar* under the tail, and the *lebab*, twisted from variegated camel's hair threads, under the neck. The single parts of the Markab litter (Fig. 58) are called: *ḥaraǧ* (*a*), *ʿidân al-ḥaraǧ* (*b*), *bdûd* (this because they rest on the cushion, *bedd* (*c*), *ḥoṣra* (*d*), *mibṭâḥ* (*e*), *ǧenûb* (*f*), *ǧerâjed* (*g*), *zerânîž* (*h*), and *ṛalab* (*j*).

The Rwala believe that the litter is called Abu-d-Dhûr, Father of Indefinite Periods of Time, because it is inherited from generation to generation, from age to age, *min ǧîlen îla ǧîl*, and that it will last forever. Al-Markab forms the visible

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

of white color, is selected. The animal then, as a rule, walks between the laden camels and the herds, thus forming the center of all the migrating families.

When attacked by an enemy in force on the march, the

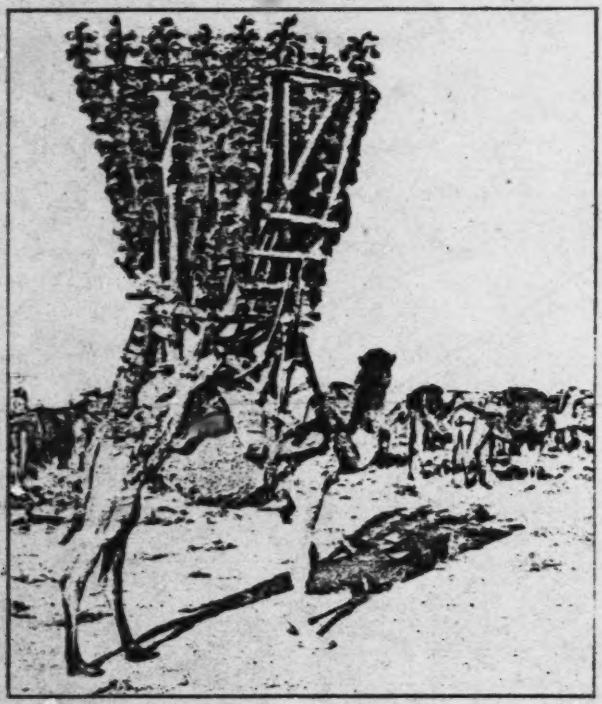

FIG. 59—Abu-d-Dhûr or al-Markab litter.

best fighters at once surround the Abu-d-Dhûr to protect it. If it seems that the enemy will push back the fighters resisting his attack and that he will break through to the pack camels, the commander of the chosen troop of fighters (called *ṣanam*) who defend the Markab will take the camel carrying this symbol by the rein and lead her at the head of his troop against the enemy. The *ṣanam* are accompanied by girls seated on she-camels, who encourage the men to persevere, and behind them follow women who threaten to beat to death any one who deserts the Abu-d-Dhûr and flees. So far no enemy has succeeded in defeating the Rwala sufficiently to take the Abu-d-Dhûr away from them. The prince, it must be said, is very

726 prudent — the more dangerous the region through which the
718 tribe has to pass when migrating, or where it encamps, the nearer together stand the tents of the various camps.

When the Rwala engage in a war of *al-manâḥ* (see above, pp. 540f.), during which they move with all their herds and tents into an enemy's territory, the camel carrying the Abu-d-Dhûr walks at the head of the whole tribe, surrounded by warriors who follow every movement of the animal with the closest
787 attention. They believe that Allâh gives signs by means of
718 the Abu-d-Dhûr,[1] from which the outcome of the fight can be foretold. Sometimes, in a dead calm, the ostrich feathers adorning the Abu-d-Dhûr begin to flutter. At other times the litter leans to the right or left, but suddenly straightens itself, remains quietly upright, and then rocks a few times from side to side. All this, the Rwala think, happens by the power of Allâh, *kudrat min allâh*, who sends them help, *ʿenâje*, from al-Markab, where He is believed to seat himself for a while. The waving of the feathers and the straightening of the Abu-d-Dhûr are signs that Allâh has touched it with his power.

782 After each victory a camel is killed before the Abu-d-Dhûr in honor of Allâh. This is also done every year, even if the Rwala have had no war to which the Abu-d-Dhûr had to be taken.

NARRATIVES OF RWALA WARS AND RAIDS

539x 726x *Ad-Drêʿi eben Šaʿlân's Raid on the Ẓefîr (Early Nineteenth Century)*

Of their wars and raids much was related to me by the Rwala.

In bygone days (at the beginning of the nineteenth century) they had a head chief named ad-Drêʿi eben Šaʿlân, who was celebrated for his bravery, *w-leh ṣît bel-furse*. Once, while encamped with his Arabs west of the Ḥawrân mountains, he heard of the defeat of Eben Haḏḏâl, the head chief of the ʿAmârât, who, while migrating with his tribe, was attacked by the Ẓefîr chief, Sulṭân eben Swejṭ, and despoiled of all he had. During the fight one of the enemy's warriors had tried to seize a pack camel guarded by Ḥoṣṣa, Eben Haḏḏâl's daughter. She had defended her animal from the man as best she could, but when he struck her she had cried out: "Ad-Drêʿi, O my hero! *W-ṣâḥat ad-drêʿi jâ raǧǧâli.*"

1 [See pp. 571–573, cat. 116, — Analyst]